

BOAZ
AND
RUTH
BLESSED:

OR
A SACRED CON-
TRACT HONOV-
red with a solemne
Benediction.

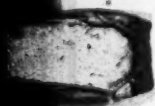
BY
BARTHOLOMEW PARSONS B. of Divinity
and Rector of *Ludgershall* in the
County of *Wiltes.*

*I have receiued commandement to Blesse, and He
hath Blessed. Num. 23. 20.*

*The friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and
heareth him, reioyceth greatly because of the
Bridegroomes voyce. Ioh. 3. 29.*

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TO
MY MVCH
RESPECTED
FRIENDS M^r

Peregrine Thistlethwaite
the yonger, Esquire, and
M^{rs} Dorothy Thistle-
thwaite his wife.

Generous S^r, at the time of your
happie Nuptialls, when your
friends and invited guests filled
you with presents of all sorts, I
amongst the rest had provided such as I
haue to giue you, even this poore spirituall

The Epistle.

mite to haue beene cast in amongst your o-
ther great gifts, had not the lot of that
boxe of oyntment powred on our Saviours
head in some sort false vpon it. But as little
Currents by being stopped, rise higher and
swell to greater streames, so this not finding
vent then to runne for that houre, is now
swolne to that bignesse to become a Torrent
and runne some longer time. The Presse is
now become as the Mid Wife to deliver this
Childe, which was then come to the birth,
had there bin strength to bring forth. Yours
it was then in the preparation, and yours it
must be now in the dedication, it being at
first intended for you, could in no good fa-
shion purchase any licence of Alienation to
be conveyed from you. In it you may see
that as stronger blessings then ordinary
were powred on the head of Joseph that was se-
parate from his brethren Gen. 49.26. so most
powerfull and prevalent blessings are pow-
red on the head of her that was separated
from her brethren and fathers house, and
ioyned to the God of Israell, had professed
that he should be her God & his people her
people

Dedicatorie.

people. *Ruth*. 1. 16. even of Ruth a Moabiteſſe, who hath the priviledge not onely to be admitted into the Congregation of Gods people *Deut.* 23. 3. * but alſo the Honour to haue the Saviour of the world come of her according to the fleſh, and to be named in the line of his Genealogy *Mat.* 1. 5. and of Boaz as godly in life, as mighty in wealth *Ruth*. 2. And when ſuch great and good perſons bleſſe ſuch godly perſons, they are bleſſed in deed, when ſuch faithfull and holy elders ſitting in the gate bleſſe in the name of the LORD ſuch religious and devout Proſelites, it availeth very much *Jam.* 5. 16. yea & they ſhall be bleſſed, as *Iſaacke* ſaid of his bleſſing *Iacob*, *Gen.* 27. 33. How much more then may you both be confident, that you ſhall receiue bleſſing from the LORD vpon this your coniugall vnion both of names * and houſes, ſithence *Deus eſt in vtroq; parente*, you are true Iſraelites on both ſides, neither of you new Proſelites drawne out of Paganisme or Idolatry, but may with an holy boasting glory as *Paul* doth for *Timothy*, *2Tim.* 1. of an vnſained faith that dwelt firſt
in

* The Hebrew Rabbins ſay that they haue a tradition of Moſes from Mount Sinai that the males of the Ammonites & Moabites not the females are forbidden to enter into the Congregation of God. Maimony.

Peregrine
Thiſtlethwait
Dorothy
Thiſtlethwait.

The Epistle

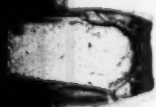
in their Grandmothers and Mothers, & not only so, but also in your line and generation on both sides; neither is your match like the marrying together of the thistle in Lebanon with the Cedar in Lebanon 2. King. 14. 9. an vnequall coniunction, but like the joyning together of *Isaacke & Rebeckah*, two persons of one kindred and family (yet Without breaking downe the Pales of degrees prohibited) of two *Cardui benedicti*, that may grow into a multitude and an holy seede in the LORD. God hath already begunne to make good this blessing vpon you in giuing you seede, and if you feare him & keepe his commandements and dwell together in coniugall vnity, hauing one heart and one soule, he will command his blessing and life for ever more, you the wife shall be as a fruitfull vine, your children like oliue plants round about your table, & you shall see your childrens children and peace vpon *Israell*. I giue you then this gift willingly, and desire you to accept it louingly, following that diuine rule, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and lay it vp not
only

Dedicatorie.

only in your chest but also in your hearts.
And the God of Heaven prosper it to you,
that it may be a faithfull Monitor to you &
speake words whereby you and your chil-
dren may be saued, which shall bee the
Crowne and rejoycing of him that longeth
after you in the bowels of Iesus Christ, and
desireth to be esteemed

Your serviceable friend in
Christ Iesus

BARTH: PARSONS.





Ruth. 4. 11.

The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachell and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israell doe thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlem.

THE Children of this World like to fishes that are in Salo, *sine sale*, in the salt water without any salt tast in the in the midst of the holiest and heavenliest actions and places cannot *put of the shooes* of their carnall affections, Exod. 3. 5. but haue too frequently their thoughts and tongues exercised about their worldly & wicked affaires, and even then and there *out of the evill treasures of their hearts, bring forth that which is e-vill* Luk. 6. 45. Ezekiells auditor even whilest they were *sitting before him to heare his words and shewing much loue with their mouthes, haue their hearts going after covetousnesse* Ezek. 33. 31. And whilest our saviour was dividing to his hearers the bread of life, one of the company rashly and rudely interrupteth him, about *speaking to his brother*

to divide the inheritance with him. Luk. 12. 13. so hardly can they which are accustomed to evill doe any good. Jer. 13. 23. even in the best times and places: but on the other side, the children of light shine still as lights in the world. Phil. 2. 15. haue sursum corda in civill as well as in sacred businesse, & out of the good treasures of their hearts bring forth good things. Luk. 6. 45. whether they are eating or drinking or whatsoever they are doing, Gods glory is their aime and end. 1. Cor. 10. 31. in all these things eructat cor, their heart is stil endinging of some good matter. Psal. 45. 1. a divine sentence is ready in their lips. Prov. 16. 10. and their mouth upon every occasion is speaking of wisdom, and their tongue talking of iudgement. Psal. 37. 30. Let them but passe by the mowers in the field they open their mouth in an holy prayer that may minister grace to the hearers, and say, the blessing of the Lord be upon you, we blesse you in the name of the Lord. Psal. 129. 8. let them but come to the reapers and their lips are full of grace, they say with that good man Boaz, the Lord be with you. Ruth. 2. 4. In the same spirit, in the same steps doe the Elders, and all the people of Bethlehem walke here. Being called vpon to be witnesses about some civill passages of buying of lands by Boaz, and purchasing of Ruth to be his wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. verl. 9. 10: they are not onely ready to doe this good office of bearing witness, all the people that were in the gates, and the Elders said we are witnesses, but also blesse them in the name of the

the

the Lord, power out a most solemn and effectuell
 fervent prayer to the Lord the father of lights
 from whom cometh downe every good and per-
 fect gift to prosper the intended matrimony of this
 present couple with blessings besitting their marri-
 ed estate, *the Lord make the woman &c.* Now our
 Saviour when he would feed the people with the
 bread that perisheth *brake it into peeces* Mark. 8. 6.
 that every one might haue his portion convenient-
 ly, I will then be a follower of him, and as becom-
 eth a faithfull and wise steward in Gods house,
 divide these words aright, that every one may the
 better haue his portion of spirituall food out of
 them. In this faithfull and charitable prayer then
 (I call it so because *Necessitas cogit orare pro se: cha-
 ritas fraternitatis hortatur pro alio* Chrys. *Necessi-
 ty compelleth a man to pray for himselfe, but charity
 exhorteth him to pray for others.* We may obserue
 the parts and points: 1. The petitioners that *find in
 their heart to pray this prayer* as David speaketh, 2.
*Sam. 7. 27. all the people that were in the gate and the
 Elders.* 2. To whom they make their prayers *euen
 to him of whom all things come* 1 Chr. 29. 14. the
 Lord, the Lord make, 3. For whom, for the par-
 ties here purposing matrimony, the woman seve-
 rally, and the man severally. 4. For what are the
 petitions for them. 1. For the woman *the Lord
 make the woman that cometh into thine house like to
 Rahell and Leah which two did build the house of Is-
 raell.* 2. For the man *and doe thou worthily in E-
 phratah, and be famous in Bethlehem, or that thou*

maist doe worthily &c. The first occurring circumstance that standeth in the doore of the text like Abraham in the doore of his tent, is of the persons petitioning and praying, *all the people that were in the gate, and the Elders*, they will not only be witnesses of the contract, but petitioners also for the contracted, they will not onely testify the covenant made betweene the parties, but also sanctify it with their prayers. I may say then to all that are present or any way pertinent to this worthy and weighty worke of contracting and marrying in the Lord, as our Saviour to the lawyer about a worke of mercy *Luk. 10. 37. vade & fac similiter, goe and doe likewise*, pray for the peace and prosperity of the parties to be married, not with formall but with hearty acclamations, not with a superficiall *God giue you ioy*, but with a solemne and substantiall benediction of the parties, and invocation of the most high God possessor of heaven and earth, *to blesse them out of Zion, that they may see the good of Ierusalem all the daies of their life and that they may see their childrens children and peace vpon Israell Psal. 128. 5. 6.* The God of heaven in his blessing of *Adam and Eue*; the first married persons, in whose loynes we then were all of vs, (*and God blessed them Gen. 1. 28.*) hath shewed vs what is good and what he requireth of vs, even to be followers of him herein as deare children *Eph. 5. 1.* And in this good and old way did the generations of old walke. Abrahams eldest servant and ruler of his house, being sent by him to his country and to his kindred, to take a wife vnto
 Isaacke

Boaz and Ruth blessed.

5

Isaacke, when he cometh to the place, beginneth first with prayer to the Lord of his Master Abraham, to send him good speed that day, and to shew kindnesse vnto his Master Abraham Gen. 24. 12. And when the Lord God of his Master Abraham had led him to the house of his Masters brethren, and had prospered his iourney and hee had obtained Rebbecca to be wife vnto his Masters sonne, her brother, mother, and friends solemnely blesse her at his departure, and say, *Thou art our sister be the mother of thousands of Millions, and let thy seed possesse the gates of those that hate them* Gen. 24. 60. And when Isaacke being stricken in yeares sent Jacob to *Padan-Aram* amongst his kindred to find out a wife, he prayeth seriously for his prosperous successe, *God almighty blesse thee and make thee fruitfull, and multiply thee, that thou maist bee a multitude of people, and giue the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee* Gen. 28. 3. 4. And that *indolent* marriage Psalme endited at Solomon taking to wife of Pharaohs daughter being an eminent type of the spirituall marriage betweene Christ and his Church, doth *omnia frustra precari*, pray for all happinesse to the married parties, is full of supplications for them, benedictions of them, and propheticall predictions of happinesse vnto them Psal. 45. And if all things must be done in the name of the Lord, Col. 3. 17. much more must this great thing bee begunne in the name of the Lord, if *an illa* euery creature or ordinance of God must be sanctified with prayer

1 Tim. 4. 5. much more must this solemn ordinance of his be blessed and sanctified with prayer. It is a good rule giuen by Marke the Eremite *πρωτος γεννημενος η πρωτος*, *prayer must be the Vsher of all our actions.* But how are these last and worst daies whereinto we are false, degenerated from this holy courle? Happily we may heare a formall and superficiall acclamation of God giue you joy, drap out of some few mens mouths at such times & meetings. But most mens vn sanctified mouthes at such times, like puddle waters, that being stirred send forth noylome sent, breath out nothing but such corrupt communications as may rather minister grieffe then grace to the hearers, & which might better besit the vnchast bedde of fornication in the stewes, then the vndefiled bedde of honourable matrimony in the house, and from the abundance of their polluted hearts, they belch forth such vncleane and vsauory words as may make their eares to tingle that heare them: They cannot speake the language of Canaan at such times, any holy and heavenly prayers, but the language of Ashdod ribals and scurrilous iests, *filthy and foolish talking which are not convenient*, as the Apostle speaketh Eph. 5. 3. And as David said of the slanderous tongue Psal. 52. 4. *thou louest all devouring words o thou deceitfull tongue:* so may I of theirs, *thou louest all defiling words, o thou vaine and vncleane tongue;* The marriage meetings with them are never well seasoned or celebrated vnlesse they be filled with filthy discourses, and obseane songs,
and

and of a Bride house made a Brothell house as the Idolatrous Iewes turned *Bethell, Gods house, into a Bethauen*, an house of vanity, Hof. 4. 15. They countenance not Gods ordinance with their holy appreciations, but rather confound the married parties with their horrible prophanations, and fill their faces with shame, *as though with Zimri and Cosbi, they weretaken in an vncleane act*, Numb: 25. and the language of the whorish woman, *come let vs take our fill of lone untill the morning, let vs solace our selues with lones*, Prou: 7. 15. is nothing so impure, as many of their vnchast songs and discourses such a world of iniquity is in mens tongues to defile this sacred businesse with.

Now if it become all the people to pray at such times, much more are prayers comely in the mouthes of the Priests of the people, if it be good for the Elders that are in the gate to pray for the married persons, much more is it good for the Elders of the Church to pray for them, and blesse them as they are commanded *to pray over the sicke* Iam. 5. And this we presse and praise not as making the Ecclesiasticall benediction of the Priest the very essentiall forme of matrimony, as most of the Popish writers doe, (for then all matrimonies in the world without this benediction should haue beene no better then fornications, vnderly void for want of an essentiall forme) but as requiring it for a solemne and publike testification of the matrimoniall consent, and a benediction of the parties publishing their consent, and entering into the covenant

venant of God. For howsoever *in foro interiori*,
in the court of the conscience, it bee a true marriage
 where there is a free and full consent of the parties
 before lawfull witnesses, and cannot absolutely be
 made void for want of a benediction giuen in the
 Church, yet *in foro exteriori*, *in the externall court*,
 by evident deduction out of holy writ, and by the
 lawes of the Church and most Commonwealths,
 it is no lawfull nor laudable marriage, which is
 not confirmed & blessed in the face of the Church.
Panes nos occultæ conjunctiones, id est, non prius apud
Ecclesiam professæ, juxta machinam & fornicationem
periclitari judicantur. saith Tertullian lib. de pud-
 citia cap. 4. *With vs secret marriages, that are not*
solemnized first in the Church, are esteemed fit to bee
questioned as adulteries and fornications: And
 though Tertullian be very ancient, yet this benedi-
 ction in the face of the Church is ancients, came
 into it from the beginning, euen in the first hun-
 dred yeare after our Saviour: *Platina* in the life of
Soter Bishop of Rome, who liued in the yeare of
 Christ 174. referreth it to him and saith he ordai-
 ned it, *Ne legitima haberetur uxor nisi cui sacerdos*
ex instituto benedixisset, that none should be accoun-
 ted a lawfull wife, but whom the Minister had blessed
 according to the ordinance; But yet this rite of bene-
 diction is more ancient. For *Euaristus* who was
 Bishop of Rome in the yeare of Christ 97; in an
 Epistle to the Bishops of Africa found in the first
 Tome of the Counsells, and in the Decrees cap.
 30. q. 5. speaketh thus of it, *Aliter legitimum ut à*
Patribus

Patribus accepimus; & à sanctis Apostolis &c. Marriage is not otherwise lawfull, as we haue receaued it of the Fathers, and as we finde it delivered by the Apostles, vnlesse in its proper time it be Ecclesiastically blessed by the Priest with prayers and oblations as the manner is, wedlockes so made are lawfull, if they be otherwise undertaken, there is no doubt but they are adulteries, or dwellings together, or whoredomes, or fornications rather then marriages that are lawfull. And Tertullian againe in his second booke to his wife the 9 chapter saith, *Vnde sufficiam ad enarrandam felicitatem ejus matrimonij, &c.* How can I sufficiently set out the happinesse of that marriage which the Church maketh, the communion confirmeth, the Angels declare to be sealed, and the father counteth ratified. And S. Ambrose for his time in his 70 Epistle saith, *Conjugium velamine sacerdotis & benedictione sanctificari oportet.* Marriage must be sanctified with the Priests putting on a vail and benediction: Synesius comming to bee Bishop of Cyrene, and professing that he would still hold his wife with his Bishoprick, mentioneth this custome, *Mihi & Deus ipse & leges, ipsaq, Theophili sacra manus uxorem dedit:* God himselfe, and the lawes, & the holy hand of Theophilus hath giuen me a wife: Therefore I declare to you all, and would haue it witnessed, that I will not forsake her. Nicephorus lib. 4. hist. Eccles. cap. 55. And the fourth Councell of Carthage in the 13 Canon saith, *When the Bridegroom and the Bride are to bee blessed of the Priest, let them bee presented by their parents, or those that*

C

haue

haue the charge of the wedding. Both the lawes, Ecclesiasticall, and Imperiall are full of Canons and Constitutions, that none should wed privately, but *benedictione à sacerdote acceptà publicè*, Cap. null. cap. & qu. ijsdem. Receauing the Priests benediction publickely, *nisi sacerdotum precibus matrimonium corroboratum fuerit*, unlesse the matrimony be confirmed by the Priests prayer, which is the constitution of the Emperours Leo and Alexius Comnenus. The hereticall Anabaptists then & schismaticall Brownists professing themselues to bee wise, become fooles in condemning this ancient, needfull, and laudable rite of publike blessing in the face of the Church, the new married persons in the name of the Lord, as though there were no more required in contracting for a wife then in bargaining for a horse, onely to shake hands and come together.

But we haue eaten so much of the hony of this first point (the persons petitioning here) as is sufficient for vs, Prov. 25. 16. I come therefore to the next branch, to whom they petition and pray, *the Lord make*] And indeed on whom should they call for the marriage blessing but on him who is the father of mercies, and God of all comfort, 2. Cor. 1. 3. From whom commeth downe every good and perfect gift, Iam. 1. 17. But on him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things: Rom: 11. 36. In whose hand is power and might, and in whose hand it is to make great and to giue strength vnto all, and of whom all things come, 1. Chr. 29. 11. 12. Whose blessing alone maketh rich, Prov. 10. 22. and of whom whose-
ever

ever are blessed they shall be blessed, Gen:27.33. who should they haue in heauen but the Lord to call vpon, Psal. 73.25. And who can shew vs any good vnlesse he lift vp the light of his countenance vpon vs, Psal. 4.6. King Darius Parasites made both a flattering and a bloud-sucking law, (like the Image that Pliny speaketh of, that had both a frowning and a smiling lookes) That no man should aske any petition of any God or man for thirty daies, but of him, and this could not bee changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not. Dan. 6.7. But it is an immutable and inviolable law established in the high Court of heauen, not for thirty daies but from the beginning, till time shall be no more, that none of the household of faith should aske any petition either for the blessings of heauen aboue, or the earth beneath, or for any spirituall blessings in Christ Iesus, of any of the sonnes of men in earth, or the sonnes of God in heauen (I meane the company of the blessed Angells, or the spirits of iust men made perfect) but only of the LORD our Father and Redeemer whose name is everlasting, Isa. 63.16. Call vpon me in the day of trouble, Psal. 50.15. & if vpon him; whom should they haue in heauen but him. And it is surely sealed vnto vs with the bond of a double oath, verily, verily, I say vnto you, Whatsoeuer yee shall aske the Father in my name, not the Father and me in the holy Angells and blessed Saints name, he will giue it you, Ioh. 16.23. Here I might reape that which the holy Ghost hath sowed, that this Father of lights, & fountaine

of all blessings is to be sought and sued to in all our necessities, but I will only *hoc agere*, prosecute *opus diei in die suo*, the worke of the day in its right time and keepe my selfe within the spheare of Marriage not turning either to the right or left hand. In their asking of God a blessing on these married parties here, they plainly professe marriage to bee of his ordinance and institution. For *God as at the beginning*, Gen. 1. so now *blesseth only the worke of his owne hand*; that which he hath ordained and instituted and not any of the workes of darknesse, or of Satan the prince of darknesse. It should imply a very contradiction, that God should condemne marriage as a worke of the flesh, in which state men cannot please him, and yet blesse *Adam and Eve* at the first (*God blessed them and said, increase and multiply*, Gen. 1. 28.) and these here, & other married persons in future times in the Church. Out of his holy mouth cannot proceed blessing & cursing of the same state of life. Marriage then is his ordinance, and the worke of his hands, and ordained by him *non communiter sed singulari modo*, not after the common fashion of his other workes, but after a singular manner. For hee did not onely ordaine it in that holy place of Paradise, and in that time when *Adam* stood vpright, as hee was created after the image of God in holinesse and righteousnesse, but in the institution of it, first as it were consulted about the making of woman, and ordaining of it, *It is not good that the man should bee alone, I will make him a helpe meet for him*, Gen. 2. 18. As before

before he had deliberated about the making of man, (*let vs make man in our Image, after our likeness* Gen. 1. 26.) and did not make him with a words speaking, as hee did the other creatures, therein shewing not the infirmity of the worke-man, but the excellency and dignity of the worke, according to that of Saint Basil homil; 10. *hexameron, de nullo operum*, This word *let vs make*, is written of none of the workes which God had formerly made, but all things are made by Gods bare word and commandement *Learn therefore o man, how much thou only art esteemed*, for God did not thinke it fit to ioyne thy generation to the common commandement of the creatures, as a matter of vulgar price. After this God put his consultation and decree in execution, in forming the woman with his owne hands, and when hee had formed her, in bringing her to the man, in ioyning them together, in blessing them, and publishing the law of matrimony, therefore shall a man leaue his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh Gen. 2. 24. in all which *tanquam in expressis tabulis* wee may see the finger and ordinance of God. Therefore Theophilact in *Epitome divinorum dogmatum* *meliorum* saith, God hath not only fashioned the woman, but he also ioyned her to the man, according to the law now in practise. He brought her to the man, and hee himselfe was the betrother and giner of her in wedlocke as also he brought a certaine gift to the wedding, his blessing. And the man as soone as she was brought to him acknowledgeth

her *spiritu prophetico*, by the spirit of prophecy, to be of Gods forming and ordinance, *Adam said, this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man Gen. 2.23.* yea after the fall, he had so much light still to acknowledge her to be Gods gift, he calleth her *the woman that thou gauest me Gen. 3.12.* And least then it might be thought, that mans sinne had made void Gods ordinance, God both still kept on foot this his ordinance, even when he denounced to the serpent, *that the seede of the woman should breake his head, and to the woman, in sorrow shalt thou bring forth Children, thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee Gen. 3.15.16.* (wherevpon Adam calleth his wiues name *Eve* because she was the mother of all liuing *vers. 20.*) & also after the flood fully renewed his Charter to Noah and his sonnes, *bleſsing them and saying be fruitfull, multiply & replenish the face of the earth Gen. 9.1.* *Qui bene eruditi sunt in fide Catholica, noverunt quod Deus fecerit nuptias, They that are well instructed in the Catholike faith, know that God hath ordained marriage August: tract. 9. in Ioh. Conubium non est ex colluvione peccati, sed ex institutione Dei, Marriage cometh not from the corruption of sinne, but from the ordinance of God. Fulgen: de statu viduarum ep. 2.*

And when this ordinance was much defiled by rash divorces, marrying of many wiues, & wandering lusts, our Sauour vpon the Pharisees tempting him about divorces, revoketh and refereth

rethall to the first institution, haue ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said for this cause shall a man leaue Father and Mother and shall cleaue to his wife, and acknowledge that still to be Gods ordinance, and the married parties to be ioyned together by God Mat. 19. 4. 5. 6. And to giue a reall demonstration hereof after he was baptized in Iordan and invested into the office of the Mediator, he vouchsafeth not only his presence at a wedding, but also honoureth it with the first miracle that ever hee wrought Ioh. 2. *Quomodo non erunt venerabiles nuptia &c.* Epiphan. lib. 2. her. 67, how shall not marriage be honourable and obtaine the kingdome of heaven, when our saviour was called to a marriage that he might blesse it? For if he had refused to goe to a wedding, then he had beene a dissoluer of marriage, but now he cometh to a wedding that he might stoppe their mouthes that spake against the truth. *Ipse rogatus ad nuptias &c.* (Aug: in quæst. vet. & nov. test. quæst. 127) Christ being intreated disdained not to goe to a wedding, and not only adorned it with his presence, but also bestowed that which was wanting to mirth; for it is written, that wine maketh glad the heart of man. And that he might shew that he did this according to the will of God his father, hee answered the Iewes about divorces, saying, that which God hath ioyned together, let no man put asunder. Marriage then is Gods ordinance, the marriage covenant is Gods covenant Prov. 2. 17. it is hee that prepareth & appointeth the wife for the husband, and

and the husband for the wife, Abraham saith to his servant, *the God of Heaven shall send his Angell before thee, & thou shalt take a wife to my sonne* Gen. 24. 7. and the servant prayeth that the *Damsell that giueth him & his Cammels water may be the woman whom God had appointed for Isaacke* ver. 14. And the Angell telleth Tobias of Sarah that should be his wife, *shee was appointed unto thee from the beginning* Tobit. 6. 17. And it is God that knitteth their hearts one to another in loue, *It was of the Lord that Sampson loued and desired the woman of Timnah* Iud. 14. 4. Hence then may the tongue of the learned speake a word in season, for the stopping of thole foule mouths that shoote out their arrowes even bitter words, either against the state of matrimony to disgrace it as miserable, or against the ordinance it selfe to condemne it as sinfull and abominable. For the first we haue a generation in the world, who seeme wise in their owne eyes, if they can boldly caluminate, and smite with the tongue this state and kinde of life as most wretched: The old heathens inuestiues, fill their mouthes with vaine reasonings and janglings against it *οὐκ ἔστι τι καὶ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο*; say they with Menander *Marriage is the uttermost of misery* and with Epicharmus *οὐκ ἔστι τι καὶ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο* &c. *there are but two good dayes with a woman, when a man marrieth her and when a man burieth her*, and with another Satyrist, *καὶ ὅταν γὰρ ἔσται καὶ ἔσται* &c. *every woman is bitternesse & she hath but two good times, one in the bed another in the graue, with Ouid* *Femina nulla bona*

bona est &c. No woman is good, but if a good wife hath happened to any one, I know not how an ill thing is become good, and with Plautus in *pæn. act. 1. Negotij qui sibi volet vim comparare, navim & mulierem, hac duo comparato &c.* Hee that will get him store of businesse, let him get him these two things, a ship and a wife, for no two things haue more businesse: and with Menander in Atheneus lib. 13. *deipnos. cap. 13. In pelagus te iacis negotiorum, &c.* thou throwest thy selfe into a sea of businesse, not the Lybucke or *Ægean* sea, where of thirty scarce three ships are cast away, but, *ducens uxorem servatur prorsus nemo*, no man that marrieth a wife escapeth. So whilest they could not or would not distinguish betweene the abuses and faults of the married persons, and the lawfulnessse, happinesse, and commodity of the state it selfe, Satan hath beene a lying spirit in their impure mouthes, & like mills that cannot grinde but with foule water, they haue poured out floods of exclamations against the state it selfe.

But as though this were too little, there hath risen in the Church it selfe, a worse generation of those heretickes that speaking perverse things, nay lies in hypocrisie, and hauing their consciences seared with an hot iron *1. Tim. 4.* have called good evil, light darknesse heere, this ordinance of God, the institution of Sathan, & haue condemned marriage as altogether vnlawfull in any, which the Holy Ghost hath commended to be *honourable in all* *Heb. 13.5.* I will not spend the time in mention

ning, nor tire your cares with hearing the names of that rabble of hereticks, that in the primitiue Church belched out these blasphemies, that marriage and procreation was of the diuell, and that the married persons were excluded from all hope of heauen or happinesse to come. Let their memory perish with their heresy; and let Gods word be true and every man a liar. And Antichrist of Rome (of whom Daniell prophesied that *he should not regard the desire of women*, Dan. 11. 37. that is, hee should *simulare castitatem vt plurimos decipiat, counterfeit chastity that he might deceiue very many*, as Hierome vpon that place interpreteth it) with his false prophets, that they might commend the single life of their votaries, and compell their Clergy to it, haue set their mouthes against heauen in vilifying the ordinance it selfe. Pope innocent in his third Epistle, can find out these texts against marriage of the Clergy, *be ye holy because I am holy*, The state of marriage then by this reasoning is vnholly, and, *to the vncleane and vnbeleeuers nothing is cleane, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, all married persons then are in the flesh and vnpleasing to God. And is it not a wonder that Cardinall Bellarmine himfelfe in this cleare light of learning and the Gospell, would defend that which the Pope spake in the darke time of ignorance, *Non male dici possit. de coniugatis, qui sunt in carne non possunt placere Deo. It may not amisse be said of married persons, they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, de sacram: matr: cap. 5. And c.

Nupt.

Nupt. 32. qu. 1. the same Pope like an excellent Arithmetician and Divine too reasoneth thus, *The Scripture* said of the first, 3. 4. 5. and 6. day when God had finished the worke of every day, & God saw that it was good, but it is not said so of the second day, signifying that the number of two is not good which doth divide from union, and figureth the marriage covenant, whereupon all the creatures that enter the Arke of Noah by two are unclean: see we not what a deepe mystery he hath found in the number of two against marriage, and he reasoneth there, that if lay men must abstaine from their wiues for a time, that they may giue themselves to prayer, much more ought Priests who must pray and sacrifice daily, abstaine from such company, which Bellarmine secondeth, and supposeth againe lib. de Cler. c. 18. *actus coniugalis hominum reddit totum carnalem et ineptum ad divina*, the matrimoniall act maketh a man wholly carnall, and unfit for diuine things, and cap. 19. *Matrimonium vehementer, &c.* Matrimony vehemently hindreth earnestnesse in praying, powerfulness in preaching, and care of the poore. And lastly to fill vp the measure of their iniquity, they say, that a Priest sinneth more grievously in marrying a wife, then in committing fornication, and keeping a concubine, Coster Enchirid. and that a *Digamus* which hath had two wiues successiue, is reiected from priesthood, but not a fornicator, because Digamy, is more forbidden then adultery or keeping a concubine Bellar: de cler. cap. I say therefore with Michaell the Archangell *imperet illis Deus*, the Lord rebuke

them Iude the 9 verse, for casting dung in the face of his ordinance.

But to passe on further into the waters of the sanctuary, we shall finde that these people and Elders of Bethlehem doe all things well heere, for that they take every good occasion of prayer, it is well, *we should pray without ceasing* 1 Thes: 5.17. that they call vpon the Lord heere, seeking to the fountaine and not digging to them, cisternes, that can hold no water, it is good and comely, *whom should they call vpon but the Lord who is worthy to be praised & prayed vnto* Psal: 18.3. that they pray for Boaz and Ruth, the persons intending to enter into the covenant of God, it is their charity that seeketh *not her owne alone but the Good of others* 1 Cor. 12. as all the members of the mysticall body of the Church *haue the same care one for another* 1 Cor. 12.25. *and pray one for another* 1am. 5.16. Now the persons for whom they pray and the blessings for which they pray, that they may be blessed with, are so involved and linked one with another, that they cannot be disioyned in the handling, these blessings are severall. 1 For the woman *the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachell and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israell*, wherein wee haue 1. The woman described by a speciall effect, *the woman that is come into thine house*. 2 The blessing it selfe both expressed, *that she may be like Rachell and like Leah*, and also explained wherein it should consist, *which two did build the house of Israell*. The woman:

woman here is first of all described vnto vs by a speciall effect and called *the woman which is come into thine house*] The wiues place then is to bee in the house with the husband: *Isaak* bringeth *Rebekah* into the same tent with him, when she becometh his wife, Gen. 24. 67. *David* feteht *Bathsheba* into his house, when he took her to wife, 2. Sam. 11. 27. Nay she is not only to be receaued into the house, but also into the heart and bosome, *she is the wife of the bosome*, Deut. 13. 6. *Set me as a seale vpon thine heart*, saith the Church to Christ, Cant. 8. 6. And the husband must loue the wife, as Christ loued the Church, Ephesians 5. 25. The soule of *Jonathan* (whose loue to *Dauid* was wonderfull passing the loue of women, 2. Sam. 1. 26.) was knit with the soule of *Dauid*, and *Dauid* loued him as his owne soule, 1. Sam. 18. 1. if this payre of friends had *plures fluxus et non confusio*, one soule in two bodies, how much more is it and ought it to be so in the married payre, and if it bee good and pleasant for bretheren to dwell together, Psal. 133. 1. how much more is it good and pleasant for them that are no more twaine but one flesh to dwell together, seeing they make but one body, it is monstrous that *unum corpus sit in duobus locis*, that one body should bee in two places. The wife that was made of the rib of man, and made to bee an helper before him, must be collaterall & conversant with him, haue *individuam vitam consuetudinem*, an inseparable society of all hir life with him, which is the very definition of marriage, and agreeable to that

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Apostolique Canon, *Let not the wife depart from the husband*, 1. Cor. 7. 10. *with her the husband must reioyce, and be ravished alwaies with her lone*, Prov. 5. 18. 19. and if they must loue together, they must liue together, *Vbi amor ibi oculus*, where the loue goeth there the eye desireth to be looking still, shee is his *companion*, Mal. 2. 17. and so must cohabite together with him and not breake company, according to that *likewise yee husbands dwell with them*, 1. Pet. 3. 7. *The harlots feet abide not in the house, but she is without and in the streets*, Prov. 7. 11. 12. but the vertuous woman *looketh well to the waies of her household*, Prov. 31. 27. and *chast women must be keepers at home*, Tit. 2. 5. It is a duty imposed on married women to *guide the house*, 1. Tim. 5. 14. and so to bide in the house. That which Saint Hierome said of the Monke out of his Cell, *Monachus in oppido piscis in arido: A Monke in the street is like a fish on the dry land*, is true of them, a woman gadding from house to house, from place to place, is like a fish out of the water, his proper element. *Plutarch* in quæst. Rom. qu. 29. relateth that the Romans had a custome not to suffer the Bride to goe ouer the threshold, but to carry her over, & the Boetians, to burne the Axeltree of the Cart before the doore on the marriage day, both which rites were memorandums to them that they must be housekeepers. The Tortoise & the Snayle that carry their shells vpon their backes, are the Emblems and Hieroglyphicks of a good wife, that must carry her house vpon her backe. *Non sunt in-*

uenta

venta aque dulcia nomina, &c. (Bernard. ferm. 7. in Cant.) there are not sound names alike sweet to expresse mutually the sweet affections of the word & the soule, as the Bridgroom and the Bride, for they haue all things common, nothing proper, nothing diuided from themselues, there is one inheritance to them both, one house, one table, one bed, yea one flesh.

Hearc this then all yee married, both low and high, rich and poore, take heed, O thou woman, that thou be not a follower of *Vashti* king *Assuerus* wife, who refused to come into her husbands company at his commandement, Est. 1. 11. 12. nor of the harlot, who forsaketh the guid of hir youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God, Prov. 2. 17. And take heed likewise, O thou man; that thou forsake not the wife of thy youth, who is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant, Mal. 2. 14. *Coniunctio est à Deo diuortium & separatio à Diabolo.* The ioyning together of man and wife is of God, their sundring & separating is of the Diuell.

Now this clause, *The woman that commeth into thine house*] is like the little cloud that *Eliahs* seruant saw no bigger then an hand, which yeelded a great raine, 1. King. 18. 44. many doctrines might drop from hence as the raine, Deut. 32. 2. but I will pitch vpon one necessary thing, if it bee the mans house (into thy house) if he be the *dominus*, Master of the house, then she ought to liue peaceably with him in his own house, it is noted a thing monstrous and vnnaturall that a mans enemies should bee they of his owne house, Mic. 7. 6. and much more that a mans

mans capital enimie should be the wife of his own house and bosome, *if God made men to bee of one minde in an house*, as our vulgar translation hath it, P^{sa}. 68. 6. much more is it of his ordinance that man and wife should be of one minde in an house. Lot would haue nothing done to the Angells (strangers as hee thought) that were come vnder the shadowe of his roofoe for protection, and much more should the master of the house be safe vnder the shadowe of his roofoe from the poisoned darts of his wiues tongue. David aggravateth the sinne of Rechab and Baanah in murtherring Ishbosheth, in that they did it in his own house, *wicked men haue slaine a righteous person in his owne house*, 2. Sam. 4. 11. and it addeth to the impiety when the wife of the house becommeth a *brawling woman in the house of society*, as the Hebrew phrase is, Prov. 21. 9. If the man should not be like a Lion to his people, and servants in his house, Ecclus, 4. 30. much lesse should the wife be like a Lionesse to the man in his owne house, which is his Castle, as wee say in our natiue proverbe: The Scripture phrase saith of David, *that he sate in his owne house*, and the Lord gaue him rest from his enimies round about, 2. Sam. 7. 1. and of Nebuchadnezzar, *that he was at rest in his house*, Dan. 4. 4. The house then is the place of rest, & not to be disquieted by her that should rest in the bolome. *Every house divided against it selfe shall not stand*, Mat. 12. 25. especially if the wife bee against the husband and the husband against the wife, the fall of it wil be as great as the fall of that house

house on which the raine descended and the windes blew and beat, Mar. 7. 27. And if the man must liue ioyfully with his wife all the daies of his life, Eccl. 9. 9. she must not liue contentiously with him, *Falices ter & amplius, quos irrupta tenet copula, nec ullis diuulsus querimoniis, suprema citius solvit amor die.*

Thrice happy they and more then that,
Whom bands of loue so firmly ties
That without brawles till death them part,
Tis undissolued and neuer dies.

It is memorable that *Pliny* (in a letter to *Gemnius*, lib. 7.) reporteth of *Macenius* that he liued with his wife 39 yeares without brawling: And *Publ. Rubenius* or *Rubevis Celer* would haue it written on his graue, *Cum Caia Ennia uxore, vixit annos 43 menses octo sine querela.* He liued with *Caia Ennia* his wife 43 yeares 8 months without any quarrell. And *Silvius Paternus* on his wiues tombe in the territory of *Nismes*, *Cum qua vixit annos 33 sine ulla animi lasura: with whom he liued 33 yeares without any hurt or breach.* I thinke few such inscriptions can be found, written on tombes in our dismall and contentious daies. The old heathen when they sacrificed on the marriage day, threw away the gaul from the rest of the sacrifice, to signify that in wedlocke strife and anger should ever be absent. *Plato* de præcept. conjugal. otherwise it is not *congiuium sed coniugium*, as one said when he had married a contentious wife, *not wedding but chiding or warring, not marrying but jarring.* And

it was wittily spoken by him that said, *Non placet mihi domus, in qua Gallina cantat, Gallus tacet.* I like not the house wherein the Hen croweth and the Cocke is silent. Abraham Benesra the Rabbin obserueth that in the Hebrew names *שׂרָא* and *רָחֵל* is found the name *רַ* or Iehouah, who is the former of the woman & author of marriage, and that this name remaineth in marriage as long as they loue and liue peaceably (for then the peace of God is with thē) but if they forget piety towards God, and peace one towards another, then Gods name is gone, and there is nothing but *שׂרָא* and *רָחֵל* the fire of contention here, and the fire of confusion hereafter. *Quibus conjugium infelix contigit* (Aristot. in Rhetor.) They that are unhappily wedded, are deprived of the better halfe of their happinesse. And there is a French proverbe, *Non est felicitate natus, qui non sit felicitate maritatus*: That he is not happily borne that is not happily wedded. Pineda on Iob obserueth out of Cyprian, Austin, Chrysostome, Prosper, & Gaudentinus, that the Diuell would not destroy Iobes wife being a foolish, that is, a wicked woman, as he did his children, but left her to vex him the more. *Vt novum calamitatis genus inde viro existeret*, that by her a new kinde of calamity might bee heaped on her husband. The contentions of a wife are a continuall dropping, Prov. 19. 13. and 27. 15. and it is better to dwell in the corner of the house toppe, then with a brawling woman in a wide house, Prov. 19. 9. and 25. 24. both which Solomon repeateth twice for sayling, nay It is better to dwell in the wildernes then

then with her, Prov. 21. 19. S. Austin thought hee could not compare an ill conscience to any thing better then to a bad wife (and he vseth the comparison so often that it seemeth hee liked it, for wee finde it in Psal. 33. & 35. & 45.) to a bad wife, both which suffer him not to rest, *are with him in cubiculo & cubili, both in his chamber and in his bed, nec fugere nec fugare licet*, as Lipsius saith, *a man can neither fly from them, nor makethem fly from him.* And Iesus the sonne of Sirach, who not only gathered the graue sentences of wise men, but vttered some of his owne full of vnderstanding and wisdom (in *prafat. libri*) complaineth most pathetically of a contentious wife, *I had rather dwell with a Lion and a Dragon, then to keepe house with a wicked woman*, Ecclus. 25. 16. *All wickednesse is but little to the wickednesse of a woman, let the portion of a sinner fall vpon her*, vers. 19. *As the climbing of a sandy way is to the feet of the aged; so is a wife full of words to a quiet man*, vers. 20. *a wicked woman abateth the courage, maketh an heavy countenance, and a wounded heart*, ver. 23. I say then with S. Paul, *unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, let not the wife depart from the husband*, 1. Cor. 7. 10. for she is come into his house to be an helper meet for him, let there be no strife betweene them in the house, for they are more then bretheren, one flesh, and one soule in two bodies; If they loue peace & would faine see good daies, let them liue in peace, and refraine their tongues from speaking of euill one to another. *Let there be in her tongue, kindnesse,*
meeknesse,

meeknesse, and comfort, Ecclus, 26. 23. *that shee may reioyce her husband, and that he may fulfill the yeares of his life in peace,* Ecclus 26. 2. And then the God of peace shall be with them, and *the peace of God which passeth all vnderstanding,* shall keepe their hearts and mindes through Christ Iesus. Phil. 4. 7.

But it is high time that I should goe on forward to the loynes in these waters of the sanctuary, come to the matter it selfe prayed for on the behalfe of the woman here, which is both expressed, *like Rachel and like Leah*, & also explained wherein it should consist, *which two did build the house of Israel, for nulla similitudo currit quatuor pedibus, no similitude agreeth in all respects,* but is limited in some particulars wherein the proportion lieth. They builded Israel then, in that by themselves, & their two handmaids, giuen to their husbands, they raised it from *Iacob* alone to twelue populous and mighty Tribes, as an house from a low foundation is raised vp in goodly and lofty superstrutions and buildings of walls, windowes, turrets, and the like. For so the holy Ghost in the originall tongue is delighted to set out the generation of mankind, and procreation of children, by the name and comparison of building, *The ribbe which the Lord God had taken from the man, builded (made) he a woman,* Gen. 2. 22. with speciall care, art and fit proportion. And so where *Nathan* in 1. Chron. 17. 10. saith to *David*, *the Lord will build thee an house,* in 2. Sam. 7. 11. where the same story is againe mentioned, he saith, *the Lord will make thee*

an house. So Sarah being barren her selfe, and praying Abraham to goe in vnto her maide saith, it may be I may be *builded by her*, that is, obtaine children by her Gen. 16. 2. And he that refused to marry his brothers wife to raise vp vnto his brother a name in Israell, *is called a man that will not build vp his brothers house* Deut. 25. 9. And so God saith of that faithfull Priest that hee would stirre vp vnto him selfe in Elias place, *that he would build vnto him a sure house* 1 Sam. 2. 35. that is, blesse him with a plentifull posterity successiue without failing. They builded the house of Israell then, in that by their fruitfulnessse, they were a notable Seminary of Plants growing vp in the Church and common wealth of Israell. And it is all one, as if they had prayed for Ruth in Isaacks words praying for Iacob, *God almighty blesse thee, make thee fruitfull, and multiply thee, that thou maist be a multitude of people, and giue thee and thy seede the blessing of Abraham* Gen. 28. 3. 4. They pray then that she may bee blessed with fruitfulnessse, the originall and primary blessing of marriage at the beginning, *God blessed them and said increase and multiply*, Gen. 1. 28. The maine end and scope then that persons entring into this covenant of God, the marriage band must aime at, is that they may build Israel, that out of their loynes may issue seed to be profitable members of the church & cōmō wealth. for *hinc cœli plantatur & terra fundatur, out of marriage is heauen filled, & the earth established.* Sarah being barren her selfe, desired issue though

it were by her maide, that so she might in some
 sort obtaine the end of wedlocke, the marriage
 blessing Gen. 16. 2. And faire Rachell being fruit-
 lesse, thinketh her selfe but a dead stocke, *Giue me
 Children or else I die*, will needes haue children
 though it be but by a deputy Gen. 30. 2. 3. Re-
 beccas friends at her sending away to Isaacks wife,
 dismisse her with this solemne blessing respecting
 the true end of her marriage *be thou mother of
 thousands of millions* Gen. 24. 60. And when their
 blessing prevailed not effectually, but after marri-
 age she was barren, Isaacke intreated the Lord for
 her, that she might conceaue Gen. 25. 21. Hannah
 Elkanahs wife hauing her wombe shut vp by the
 Lord, with bitternesse of soule and weeping sore
 prayeth vnto the Lord to giue vnto her a man-child
 for increase of the Church and *that she may giue
 him vnto the Lord* 1 Sam. 1. 11. Tobias in his pray-
 er on the marriage night with his wife saith, *thou
 knowest Lord that I take not this sister for lust but
 vprightly or as the vulgar hath it sola posteritatis
 dilectione, for loue of posterity onely* Tobit. 8. 7. &
 St Paul requiring that *the younger women should
 marry, beare children* 1 Tim. 5. 4. maketh the end
 of marriage to be procreation and bearing of chil-
 dren. It is one of the many blessings wherewith
 Solomon is blessed at his marriage, *In stead of thy
 Fathers, shall be thy children* Psal. 45. 16. And it
 is a grand blessing that God powreth out vpon the
 married man fearing the Lord, *that his wife should
 be as the fruitfull vine, by the sides of his house, his
 children*

children as the olive branches round about his table
 that he should see his childrens children Psal. 128. 3.
 6. God made woman at the first, and he made but
 one, though he had the residue or excellency of spirit,
 and made her the wife of the covenant with one man,
 that he might seeke out a godly seede. Mal. 2. 15. a
 seede that should be members of his Church prin-
 cipally and secondarily of the common wealth.
Christiani tantum procreandorum, &c. Christians
 marry wiues only for procreation of Children, where-
 as others take them for their pleasures sake, Iustin
 Martyr in Apolog. pro Christ. ad Antonin. nuper:
 And Clemens Alexandrinus lib. 2. pagag. cap. 10.
 saith, *Qui matrimonio iuncti sunt, ijs scopus est,*
&c. The scope and purpose of them that are ioyned
 together in matrimony is the procreation of chil-
 dren, and their end that they may be good children,
 and a little after there, the married man plants and
 sowes for God, for God said increase and multiply,
 whom we must obey, and againe in his lib. 2. Stromat:
 he notably expresseth this end of marriage *genuerunt*
maioris &c. Men must marry altogether, both for
 their country sake, and for succession of children, and
 the perfection of the world as much as in them lieth.
Matrimonium ex hoc appellatum est, &c. (saith Au-
 gust. lib. 19. con: faust. cap. 26. Matrimony was hence
 named, because a woman ought to marry for nothing
 else but that she may become a mother, and againe
 lib. 2. de adulter: coniug. ad Pollent: cap. 12. he saith
propagatio filiorum &c. The propagating of Chil-
 dren is the first naturall and lawfull cause of marri-

age:

age: And Ambrose cited in the cannon law *c. pudor* 32. qu. 2. saith *Pudor est faminis nuptiarum premia non habere, &c.* It is a shame to women when they haue not the reward of marriage, who marry only for this end, and the Civill law *L. Librorum* saith, *Parentes liberorum procreandorum animo & voto uxores ducunt*, Fathers marry wiues with a purpose & desire of procreating children. And Lombard the M^r of the sentences as fully to this end as the best, saith *lib. 4. Sentent. distinct. 30. l. d. Finalis causa matrimony contrahendi, &c.* the principall finall cause of contracting matrimony is increase of children, for for this God ordained marriage amongst our first parents, to whom he said increase and multiply.

I say then here with the Psalmist Psal. 50. 22. Consider this ye that forget God, and your duty to God herein: How many are there amongst vs that in their marrying doe not so much as dreame of marrying to build up Israell, to beget a Godly seed to the Lord, to be plants growing vp in his church and commonwealth? Nay doe they not rather say and wish in their hearts, that the wombe of their companion may be shut vp, that they may liue at ease, and be free from providing for their family and posterity? doe they not in their sence cry out, *blessed are the wombes which never bare, & the paps which neuer gaue sucke?* Luk: 23. 29. Some there are that onely respect a faire face and a glorious outside (noe matter how foule and leaden she bee within) like the sonnes of God in the old world

who

who saw the daughters of men that they were faire & tookethem wiues of all which they chose Gen: 6. 2. These remember not what a vanishing shadow they catch after; For fauour is deceitfull and beauty is vaine, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised Prou. 31. 30. *Florem decoris singuli carpunt dies Sen:* Every day croppeth somewhat from the flower of beauty, and againe in Hippol: *Anceps forma bonum mortalibus, &c.* beauty is an vncertaine benefit that mortall persons haue, a short gift for a little tme. And Greg. Naz. saith excellently in his 3. orat: *pulchritudo corporis, temporis & morbi ludibrium:* beauty of body is the mocke of time and sicknesse. And another Poet to the full, *vitrea gemmula, fluxaq; bullula, candida forma est, nix, rosa, ventus fumus & aura nihil,* Bern. Banhusius Epigram. lib. 4. *A faire forme is nothing but a iemme of glasse, a fading bubble, snow, arose a dew, a winde, smoake, aire, nothing.* But all this will sound best to vs out of the mouth of a golden trumpet of the Church, St Chrysostome in orat: *de pulchrit. & de fæmina, vides venustam mulierem, fulgidum habentem oculum,* when thou seest a faire woman, that hath a twinkling eye, & a smiling face, a looke pleasant, attractiue and amiable, such as putteth thy heart into an heat and setteth on fire thy desire, thinke that that which so ravisheth thee, is nought else but earth, and that the fire which burneth thee is but dung, and then will thy fury bee asswaged. Raise vp the skinne of her face, and thou shalt see all the wilenesse of that goodly shew. Stay not

upon the outward maske, but pierce with the eye of thought into that which is within, and what else shalt thou see there but bones sinewes and veines? But this is not enough, Remember that beauty changeth, groweth old, and withereth, that the quicknesse of the eye waxeth dead, that the cheekes grow hollow, that all that faire flower passeth away. See what is that maketh thee (as it were) a beast. It is ashes, dust and filth, that burneth thee. For what is the substance of this beauty that thou seest but snott, spittle, corrupt blood, and the iuice of rotten nourishment? What cometh there out of the eares, out of the eyes, out of the nose, out of the mouth? And if these evacuations and ordinary defluxions of excrements should cease, & that the brest, the liver, and braine should leaue to purge themselves that way, all this goodly shew declineth & decayeth, the skinne withereth, and the eyes sinke into the head.

Some againe only respect mony and mucke, marry wiues as Iudas betrayed his master with *Quantum dabit* Mat. 26. and as the Shechemites receiued circumcision, onely to get a booty and enrich themselves, shall not their cattell and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? Gen. 34. 23. *quarenda pecunia primum*, mony is the marke that they principally shoote at, be she vertuous or vitious, wife or foolish, faire or foule, young or old, equall or vnequall for them; they little regard, so she come as Balacks messengers did to Balaam, with the reward of diuination in her hands Numb. 22. These are not of the minde of him who being asked

asked why he would not marry a richwife answered *uxori nubere nolo mea: I will not be married to my wife.* *Insolens malum est uxor dives* saith Plaut. in Aul. *A rich wife is an insolent mischiefe,* and another saith *Argentum accepi, dote imperium vendidi. I tooke mony and sold my rule for her dowry.* And in this kinde the transgression is doubled, when this first and fairest end of marriage, procreation, is frustrated and evacuated by lust and lucre meeting together, either when an old silicernium, being like Bazzillai the Gileadite 2. Sam. 19. must yet marry with a young woman, or an old doting dame, *must haue lust when she is old* (which seemed vnnaturall to Sarah Gen. 18.) and be married to a young man in the flower of his youth, let the young parties in this case bethink themselues how farre short they come of the sonnes of Onan Gen. 23. 8. and the old, whether it were not better for them to say with Naomi Ruthes mother in law *I am too old to haue an husband* (or a wife) for the analogy is all one Ruth. 1. 12. & she spake it when she was past procreation. *Cum sene nupta*, saith Plautus in Mi. glor. She that is married with an old man, is neither married, nor alasse a widdow. The Greeke tongue, by a fine elegancy of speech calleth such wedlocks *αἰνῆς γάμος* marriages and no marriages, and Clemens Alexandrinus lib. 2. Pædag. c. 10 to this purpose, *non coire ad procreationem, &c.* Not to come together for procreation, is to wrong nature. Therefore nature to children doth not yet grant any wiues, to old persons it denieth marri-

age. Plutarch in his Solon reporteth a memorable saying of that Tyrant Dionysius, when his mother being old and past procreation, had desired him to bestow her vpon a husband, which was, *that he had often by tyranny overthrowne the lawes of the Cittie, but that he could not violate the law of nature by placing her in marriage.* Luther in his commentary on Gen. cap. 25. speaking of such vnequall matches saith *Qui docuit vetulas & dominas &c.* to them who marry old women and their mistresses for wealth or glory, God giue the cup of passion as Bernard speaketh, because they simply, seeke wealth and glory not procreation of children, and yet they are not to be reiected for their reverence and glory of marriage. S^t Augustine lib. 9. de gen. ad. lit. cap. 3. disputeth the question how this is to be vnderstood that the woman was made to bee an helper for man and resolueth *probabiliter* at least that it was *propter filios procreandos* for procreation of children as it was said to them at the beginning, increase and multiply, or if it were not so, to what end was she made an helper, if to till the earth with him, there was yet noe businesse, that the man should need helpe, and if he did, another male, who would haue beene a better helpe, should haue beene made. And so I may say of comfort, if he were weary of solitarinesse. For how much more conveniently would two friends dwell together for conuersing and conferring, then a man and a woman?

I haue feasted or rather satiated you with full dishes vpon all the particulars hitherto, I will now
but

but gather vp the fragments on that which remaineth, which is the matter that they pray for on the behalfe of Boaz the man entring into the covenant of matrimony, *and doe thou worthily*, or (as some read it) *and that thou maist doe worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem*, or as it is in the Hebrew, *proclaime thy name in Bethlehem*. In which they pray for two things for him: 1. for a noble and notable action to be performed by him, *that he may doe worthily vertuously and courageously in his place and calling*: 2. for an event to follow therevpon, that honour and renowne may follow his good deeds, as the shadow doth the body, *and be famous or proclaime thy name in Bethlehem*. Now Ephratah and Bethlehem diversified in name are all one in thing, one citty so called *conjunctim*, ioyntly together as Mic. 5. 2. *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah though thou be little among the thousands of Iudah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto mee, that is to be ruler in Israel*, or *diuifim* apart as here doe worthily in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem, for the first thing which they pray for him, the action that hee should performe, the Hebrew phrase will beare both these readings, either, *get riches in Ephratah, or doe worthily, vertuously, courageously in Ephratah*; For so in the same sense the very same phrase is found of necessity, Deut. 8. 17. where Moses straightly forbiddeth that after Gods bringing them into that plentiful land described there vers. 7. 8. 9. and that abundance of wealth mentioned vers. 12. 13. *they should say my*

power, &c. & so all the 17, & 18, vers. So againe Iob vseth this phrase in this sense, chap. 31. 25. *If I reioyced because my wealth was great*, for that it must be read so, not because my *vertue or courage was great*, the words following shew, *and because mine hand hath found or gotten much*. And so in this phrase in the second chapter here, v. 1. Boaz himselfe is called *a mighty man of wealth*. Againe sometimes this phrase in the Hebrew tongue must be read *doe worthily, vertuously, and couragiously*. So it is better read of Solomons virtuous woman, after all hir good and glorious deeds *many daughters haue done vertuously*, then *many daughters haue gotten riches but thou surmountest them all*, Prov. 31. 21. though the phrase in hebrew will beare both senses. So 1. King, 1. 52. Where this very phrase is, it must be read, *if he will shew himselfe a worthy mā there shall not an haire of him fall to the ground*, not *if he will shew himselfe a rich man*. And here againe cap. 3. v. 11. Boaz telleth Ruth in this phrase, *all the city of my people doth knowe that thou art a virtuous woman, not a rich woman*, for she was a poore gleaner of corne. Now to come to the Text, I read here rather *doe worthily, vertuously, and couragiously in Ephratah*, then, *get wealth in Ephratah*: for first Boaz had wealth enough already, *hee was a mighty man of wealth*, cap. 2. 1. they need not pray for wealth for him. Secondly the honour & good name which they pray for to him in the last clause is rather a consequence and reward of doing worthily and couragiously, then of getting wealth & riches

riches. Their prayer then is that he may be *strong and conragious to doe according to Gods law*, as Ioshua is commanded, *Ioi. 1. 6. 7. 9. That hee may bee strong and of a good courage to fulfill the statutes and iudgements of the Lord without dread, or dismay*, as Solomon is exhorted by David his Father, *1. Chr. 22. 13. and that he might walke worthy of the Lord vnto all pleasing Col. 1. 10. Eph. 4. 1.* and that then for a fruit and reward of this virtuous dealing, honour and a good name may attend vpon him *and be famous, or proclaime thy name in Berthelem*, much might be said vpon all these points and parts, but I must conclude and contract: Amongst the Romans there was none other way to the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue, & amongst vs Christians, virtue must bee the high way to honour, godlinesse to obtaine a good name; by faith, which is the ground of wedding, & which worketh by loue, *Gal. 5. 6. The Elders obtained a good report, Heb. 11. 2. and by continuance in well doing glory is to be sought for, Ro. 2. 7. ~~una~~ uel uala*, &c. good deeds giue occasion of good words, and it was wittily answered by Agesilaus to one that asked him how he might get glory, *Si dices optima, facies autem pulcherrima*, by speaking good words & doing good deeds. *Gloria virtutis comes est, vt corporis umbra, is memorem famam, qui bene fecit habet*, saith the Poet, *Glory attends vertue as the shadowe followeth the body*, hee that doth well hath a lasting fame. I knowe that *Regium est cum benefeceris, male audire, Kings* (and all Christianstoo) must looke to
be.

be reported ill of, when they haue done well in this world, to passe through honour and dishonour; euill report and good report, 2. Cor. 6. 8. to haue all manner of ill speeches spoken against them falsely for Christ and their profession sake, Luc. 6. 22. yea to haue their names cast out as euill for the sonne of mans sake. Luc. 6. 22. But as the Hebrewes tooke ioyfully the spoiling of their goods knowing that they had a better and an induring substance in heauen, Heb. 10. 34. So must we be comforted against the traducing of our names by miscreants here on earth, knowing that our names are written in heauen, Luc. 10. 20. and that if we overcome Christ Iesus will write vpon vs the name of his God, and the name of the citty of his God, the new Ierusalem and his owne name, Rev. 3. 12.

FINIS.

A
VVEDDING-RING.

FITTED TO THE FINGER
OF EVERY PAIRE THAT HAVE
OR SHALL MEETE IN THE
FEARE OF GOD:

^{O R,}
THAT DIVINE CIRCLE OF
HEAVENLY LOVE, WHEREIN
man and wife should walke all their dayes.

THE POSIE WHEREOF IS AN
expression of *A good Husbands Kindnesse*
towards his vertuous wife, with her
retaliacion of like affection.



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